

VZCZCXRO5773  
PP RUEHAG RUEHDBU RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHMO #1397/01 1491102  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 291102Z MAY 09  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3541  
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 001397

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/28/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ENRG](#) [PL](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: RUSSIA AND POLAND SEEK TO INTENSIFY RELATIONS

REF: A. WARSAW 477

[1](#)B. MOSCOW 1349

Classified By: Political M/C Alice G. Wells for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

#### Summary

[1](#)1. (C) The Russian MFA called Polish FM Sikorski's May 5-6 visit to Moscow a success for "intensifying relations." The MFA and Polish diplomats tell us that they have expanded track two mechanisms in an effort to keep contentious issues from derailing high-level talks. The GOR expressed its preference for working with Tusk, with FM Lavrov crediting him for making Russian-Polish relations "pragmatic." PM Putin accepted an invitation to visit Poland at the end of August or early September, although details were not yet final. The MFA believed that a resolution to the Vistula waterway dispute could be completed in June or July. The MFA continued to press its view that Poland is not a suitable site for a missile defense system, but said that Lavrov was satisfied with Sikorski's explanation of the EU's Eastern Partnership Initiative. Until the North Stream project is completed, the GOR will keep open a "Yamal II" project option. End Summary.

#### "Intensifying Relations"

[1](#)2. (C) Reflecting on Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski's May 5-6 visit, Russian MFA Polish Desk Officer Sergei Semenov told us May 25 that the FM's visit was a success for "intensifying relations" between Russia and Poland. Sikorski and Foreign Minister Lavrov signed no agreements during this meeting, but focused on planning for Prime Minister Putin's visit to Poland at the end of August-beginning of September, and for a schedule of bilateral committees. Putin accepted the invitation, pending a finalized schedule that would seek to mark the anniversary of the outbreak of World War II. Polish diplomats tell us that the GOP would like Putin to arrive before September 1 so bilateral affairs are not overshadowed by other visiting dignitaries, including the proposed visit of German Chancellor Merkel (Ref A).

[1](#)3. (C) According to Semenov, committees on economic cooperation, regional government, interparliamentary affairs, culture, and the so-called "difficult issues" will continue to meet in the coming months, broadening official exchanges. As Semenov and Polish diplomats here have told us, these mechanisms, or "track two efforts," were important factors in the positive turn in relations: they allowed room to discuss contrary positions without derailing the relationship at senior levels.

[1](#)4. (C) Semenov said that the GOR hopes to have an agreement on Vistula water access ready by June or July. This agreement would not necessarily have to wait for signature until Putin's visit to Poland, with Semenov holding out the

possibility that the foreign ministers could meet for a brief signing ceremony. Following Sikorski's visit, Polish diplomats were convinced that the delay on the Vistula agreement was due to Putin's desire "to have something to sign" during his upcoming visit. Semenov refused to say if Russia was willing to compromise on third-party permits in order to resolve the dispute, but he did tie Russian movement on this issue to Polish willingness to ease travel restrictions on Russian Kaliningrad residents.

#### Fixing the "Bumpy Road"

-----

15. (C) The MFA's annual report on foreign affairs labeled the Russian-Polish relations as "a bumpy road," due to Warsaw's "destructive line" on Georgia, missile defense, support for NATO enlargement, and for "opposing Russia in the post-Soviet space." The MFA credits Polish PM Donald Tusk for the move to "pragmatic relations," with Lavrov going to pains during Sikorski's visit to highlight Tusk's role: "In general, we are satisfied with the policy of the Donald Tusk government aimed at correcting the imbalance in relations with Russia, despite subjective difficulties that persist in many respects." Semenov extended these comments further on May 25, saying President Lech Kaczynski as head of state posed a problem for improved relations, but that Tusk was someone with whom Russia could work. Semenov was quick to say that relations, "regardless of who was the Polish president," would continue to improve, "but not quickly." Semenov assured us that Russian President Medvedev's new executive order forming a "Commission to Oppose Historical Falsification" was not directed against Poland, but against

MOSCOW 00001397 002 OF 002

Latvia, Estonia, and Ukraine, who had shown willingness to resurrect World War II-era fascist movements (Ref B).

#### Missile Defense

-----

16. (C) On missile defense, Semenov said that Russia hoped to work with the U.S. to avoid the deployment of interceptors in Poland. He said the system was unnecessary and that a more appropriate substitute would be an early warning system based in the South Caucasus.

#### Eastern Partnership Initiative

-----

17. (C) As Poland and Sweden were the main supporters of the Eastern Partnership Initiative, Lavrov challenged Sikorski on the proposal, with Semenov quoting Lavrov's statements to Sikorski that Russia did not "fully understand" the Eastern Partnership Initiative and the motivation behind it. Lavrov reportedly said that it appeared to be open for almost all Commonwealth of Independent States members but not for Russia. Sikorski apparently satisfied Lavrov's concerns, with Lavrov saying after the meeting that the EU was not forcing an artificial choice between Russia and the EU.

#### Yamal II?

-----

18. (C) Russia is also keeping its options open on a "Yamal II," an undefined proposal that would either build a parallel line or increase the capacity of the existing Yamal pipeline. Semenov said that this project would remain on the table until North Stream was completed. However, he said that from Russia's perspective such a project would share the same flaws as transiting gas across Ukraine, namely that Russia would then depend on two more unreliable partners for delivery to Western European customers (Belarus and Poland).  
BEYRLE